



City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor Launches Major Initiative to Save Seattle's Trees

City partners with Cascade Land Conservancy to save 2,500 acres

SEATTLE – With Earth Day right around the corner, Mayor Greg Nickels today announced an innovative partnership with the Cascade Land Conservancy to restore Seattle's public forest and stop the spread of ivy and other invasive species. The partnership is the centerpiece of the Mayor's new Green Seattle Initiative, which also seeks to increase trees and greenery in Seattle's neighborhoods, streets, and business districts, and to provide training and employment opportunities for young people.

"We're at risk of becoming 'the city formerly known as emerald,'" Nickels said. "Seattle's trees are being strangled by ivy and other non-native plants. Only 15 percent of the city has tree cover any more, and we'll lose the vast majority of what's left if we don't do something to save our trees."

Nickels today set a goal of restoring 2,500 acres of public forest by 2024, in partnership with the Cascade Land Conservancy, the state's leading land conservation organization. The new Green Seattle Partnership plans to save 150 acres of public forest per year. That's 15 times the number of acres the city has restored in years past. In addition, the Partnership will improve trails through greenbelts and natural areas, provide youth training and employment opportunities, and increase public stewardship of Seattle's forests.

"This is a community effort, and I thank the Cascade Land Conservancy for helping us save our public forest," said Nickels. "Trees not only make Seattle beautiful but they also reduce air pollution and contaminated storm water runoff that winds up in our creeks and hurts fish and other wildlife."

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“I applaud Mayor Nickels for his leadership in creating the Green Seattle Partnership,” said Gene Duvernoy, president of the Cascade Land Conservancy. “Urban forests throughout the Puget Sound region are in rapid decline, and we are in danger of losing the incredible benefits these forests provide. There is still time to restore our urban forests, but as the invasive plants outgrow our current programs, it’s clear that we must ramp up efforts. The Green Seattle Partnership will serve as a tremendous catalyst for community development, youth employment and training, and advancements in the science of urban forestry.”

In addition to saving public forest, the Mayor’s Green Seattle Initiative includes a strong focus on increasing the green in Seattle neighborhoods, and promoting design and construction of greener buildings, streets, and public infrastructure. Specific actions include

- Providing grants to neighborhood business districts and community-based groups for park restoration, tree planting, and other greening projects, especially in neighborhoods most in need of more trees and greenery;
- Working with downtown property owners to enhance downtown landscapes and improve landscaping practices;
- Creating new patches of green throughout the city by aggressively promoting environmentally friendly development practices such as green building and innovative “green” street design.

For more information about the Green Seattle Initiative, please visit www.seattle.gov/mayor.

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